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TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1918.

Christmas and FREE Transfers

What a Splendid Santa Claus the Street Car Companies Could Be If They Wanted To.

The Public Utilities Commissioners and the management of Washington street car companies have it in their power to make the community a fine Christmas present in the shape of a comprehensive system of FREE transfers.

The report of Mr. Beeler is before them, a report formulated after a careful study of the local situation by a man who KNOWS the street car business by actual experience.

There is no need for wasting time with consultations and conferences.

The Commissioners should set a definite date on which FREE transfers at ALL points recommended by Mr. Beeler shall be in operation, and if on that date the companies refuse FREE transfers a (NY) of these points, the five cent fare order should be revoked and the six-for-a-quarter rate restored THAT DAY.

If the Commissioners should follow this course today and the street car companies should exhibit a little of the Santa Claus spirit by announcing their immediate acceptance, wouldn't that make a fine Christmas present for everybody, INCLUDING the street car corporations, who could rejoice over having regained some of the public good will that they are sadly in need of?

Wanted: A Food Price Conference

And Some Other Things.

While America settles the affairs of other countries with the help of the President in Europe, is there somebody left home to settle THE important question for the American people—the price that it costs to live?

A young man who transcribes these words from the phonograph for the printed page has a slip showing that for one quart of the cheapest kind of milk and one pound of ordinary butter he paid ninety-two cents.

Thirteen cents a quart for the cheapest milk, and seventy-nine cents a pound for ordinary butter in a country that has thousands of tubs of butter stored away, and prices artificially upheld by Government fiat—that condition would justify a Peace Conference all to itself.

You read that one butcher was killed and others were threatened with death for selling meat below a certain extortionate price fixed by a retailers' combination. You read that milk dealers have been threatened when they cut prices. And you conclude that one of the first jobs for those who seek to make the world safe for democracy would be to give democracy in the U. S. A. enough to eat at a reasonable price.

You know of one reason why the poor are poor, and STAY poor, when you see the price of Liberty Bonds dropping to \$94.50 for a \$100 bond—because "little investors" are selling.

A little investor bought because he was a patriot. He sells in some cases because he cannot afford to keep the bonds.

But he sells more often because somebody persuades him that he ought to get his money and invest it in something "good." The Government bond is worth \$100 and will never be less. The something "good" is probably worth nothing.

And the little man who sells his perfectly good bond and invests it in something "good" that is absolutely worthless is displaying one of the reasons why he is a "little man."

To sell a first mortgage on the United States of America and invest the money in an oil well, a patent, or some shark's enterprise proves again that you can't help men by advising them. The advice must start from within.

Again is heard the suggestion that the fighting ships captured from Germany should be destroyed, sunk, all the money and labor in them wasted because the nations cannot decide who shall have them.

Could any more criminally wasteful suggestion be imagined?

This country and England have announced their intention to build hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of warships. Since more are to be built, why destroy modern battleships, destroyers and other fighting craft already finished and ready for use?

They should be put up at auction and sold to the highest bidder. For England has declared that she will have the biggest navy on the ocean and rule the ocean in the future, as in the past. The United States shows an inclination to have something to say about it which may, as Mr. Roosevelt says, be impertinent, but which is distinctly American.

If nations are to spend hundreds of millions in battleships, why sink and destroy what already exists?

If you want to hear real indignation in prosperous circles, just mention the fact that at Bridgeport, Conn., every

(Continued in Last Column.)

When Hubby Comes Marching Home Again

She Got the Habit Waiting Up for Him in the Old Days.

By T. E. Powers.



Beatrice Fairfax Writes of the Problems and Pitfalls of the War Workers Especially for Washington Women

TODAY'S TOPIC Play Time For the Girl Wage-Earner

THERE'S a girl worker whom I want to intercede for. She has written to me, under many names. Her cry of protest has a hundred variations. But at the bottom of it all there's an unvarying something that goes to one's heart and one's sense of justice. It's the plight of the young girl wage-earner who is treated as a child at home.

But she is a child—her parents will answer me, with a good deal of emphasis. And it's true—for it's the girl of fifteen or sixteen whom I'm speaking of. The girl who ought to be at school, and who isn't. The girl who oughtn't to have to bend her youthful mind and body to long hours of daily drudgery, but who does do this. The girl who is willing to be made use of to help out the family support, but who does rebel at having no individual freedom.

Ever so many things are wrong about this situation, of course. It goes a great deal deeper than any fifteen-year-old can understand. Without trying to go to the bottom of things, let's look at it a little. In the first place, I suppose we would all admit that a fifteen-year-old girl ought to be in school. If she isn't it means she's had a pretty scant preparation for life. If she's just an average girl, it isn't likely that she'll take her own education in hand and continue it. So she'll suffer from this disadvantage always.

Too Young to Work. In the next place, work oughtn't to be put to steady work, whether it's in a factory or in a shop or at a typewriter. You see, she's only about three-quarters grown. It's distinctly cruel—not on the part of her parents who probably can't help themselves, but on the part of the rest of us, who look on and allow it—not to let her finish her growing.

Then she's too young to have any physical stability. Her health won't have a really solid foundation for a few years more. And to tamper with her health is the worst wrong of all. But who can save her? She's one of a big family, perhaps. Her

father's out of work or earns small wages, and the younger children have large appetites, and provisions have to be paid for in cash. It's quite plain that somebody must help out.

And the sixteen-year-old doesn't demur. That isn't what she's protesting about. She's abundantly willing to do her share and a great deal more than her share to keep the family alive. It's a sacrifice to break away from her school-mates, to spend all her young strength in an impersonal treadmill. But she accepts this sacrifice as a matter of course. Those young brothers and sisters need her help. There's nothing more to be said about it.

So she starts in. And when the first payday comes around she brings home her wages with great deal of pride and satisfaction and turns them over to her mother. It's rather a critical moment. Perhaps she hasn't expected that mother will accept those precious dollars in quite the cool, matter-of-fact way that she does. Perhaps she has taken it for granted that mother will say, "How much are you going to need for yourself now that you are self-supporting? or something of that sort."

Has No Spending Money. But nothing of this kind happens. So, a little teary and disappointed and forlorn, she starts in on the second week's drudgery. And before many days have

passed, her new associates invite her to join them in some form of recreation. Perhaps it's a party at one of their houses. Perhaps it's an expedition to a moving picture theater. She reports this invitation, timidly, but hopefully, when she gets home. And it's just as she feared. Her parents firmly tell her that she's too young for evening amusements, that they can't let her go out of the house at night except in the company of an older person, and that she needs to go to bed anyway.

And when Sunday comes, it's the same story. She must mind the younger children. And she has no clothes except her working-ones, poor little Cinderella. And she's safer at home, they tell her, than with boys and girls whom nobody knows anything about.

Now I agree with these parents that a sixteen-year-old girl ought not to be out late at night. I agree that she must be carefully guarded. But I do feel when she joined the working army, her situation becomes different. Some compromises must be made. And discreet parents will make these compromises before the girl finds herself driven to actual revolt.

Every worker needs recreation. And which one of them needs it more than the girl who hasn't yet reached a safe and reasonable working age? It's her parents' duty to see that such a girl does have some playtime. I don't mean that they should let her go to dance halls. But let her join an innocent group of young people now and then. Let her have her

friends at the house. See that she goes outdoors on Saturday afternoons and Sundays. Don't drink up her life-energy without seeing that she gets some reinforcement.

Is It a Square Deal? Then there is the money question. She must clothe herself. She must meet incidental expenses. She must have spending money. Why should these sums be given to her grudgingly, in dribbles, when she gives you her total earnings without a question?

Is it fair? Are you treating her as a free individual with rights and preferences, or are you trying to keep her in a condition of slavery?

"I am sixteen years old," a girl wrote me the other day, "and make a salary of \$12 a week. I give my mother every cent I make and she never gives me any spending money. Don't you think I should receive a little spending money? Also, after working in a stuffy office all day my mother very seldom allows me to go out at night. Sometimes I am really tempted to stay out forever when after a stiff argument I am allowed to stay out until 9 o'clock."

And another writes: "I am seventeen and work in a factory, earning \$11 a week. Out of this money I only get 50 cents. Now you know, Miss Fairfax, what 50 cents is worth nowadays. Then if I ask my mother for a dime or nickel during the week I've got to cry my eyes out. And when I need something new to wear, I've got to cry week after week continually. Honest, Miss Fairfax, I am entirely disgusted with this life."

Don't you think, mothers and fathers, that there is reasonable in these appeals? Don't you think it should be your business to see that these young burden-bearers have some actual positive happiness in their lives? Remember how bad for young people excessive repression is.

To be treated with respect and to be allowed an occasional innocent "good time" is all that they are asking for. Can't you grant them this?

Christmas the Year 'Round

In the Community Tree We Would Have Reminder of Yuletide Spirit With Us Every Day.

By EARL GODWIN.

"Christmas the year 'round." That is not such a bad idea, is it? We have a great outpouring of that spirit at this time, but we don't have it with us always! The American Forestry Association is for having the Community Christmas Tree a permanent thing. It points to the great waste even in cutting down a mammoth tree which is dragged away soon after the festivities. The tree would become a gathering point at other times as well as at Christmas, the association points out. Here is the call it has sent to every community in the country:

"At this Christmas season let us consider plans for making the Community Christmas Tree permanent. In such a tree we would have a reminder the year around of the Christmas spirit and a daily lesson before us all of what the Christmas spirit means, to say nothing of the elimination of the great waste every year caused by cutting another tree. In nearly every community there will be found an ideal spot for public gathering. There should be the living, growing tree that would come to be the gathering point not only at Christmas, but at other times. Such a tree might become, in many places, the center of a scheme for planting Memorial Trees in honor of our sailors and soldiers. Let us look ahead to next year by having your committee consult the city or State forester in regard to planting a permanent Community Christmas Tree."

There is a good idea. Why not have Washington first in this year-around community spirit? Why not have Washington take the lead in planting memorial trees in honor of her boys who gave their lives for their country and in honor of the boys who offered their lives? Here is a fine opportunity for a "Victory Grove" that would be one of the finest tributes to our heroes no matter what may be done in bronze and stone.

HEARD AND SEEN

GEORGE GRANT suggests that the anti-bootlegging crusade be turned over to the Postoffice Department.

"If the department could make it as difficult to get whiskey as it is to get a postage stamp, we would indeed be dry," says George.

ERNST GERSTENBERG's place has been sold to a Chinaman. See what prohibition will do.

Wonder if this is what prompted a headline in the Sunday Star which read "Liquor Addicts May Adopt Tea."

RAY PULLMAN, our chief constable, goes on record as saying that the cuspidor is the most useless utensil on earth. My vote on this subject will back that traffic trap at Sixteenth and I streets northwest.

News From Other Cities. Ye Ed has been in New York and Baltimore lately and reports conditions in both cities as much worse than in Washington.

In New York, however, the populace generally pays more attention to men in uniform than here, and soldiers say they are more welcomed there.

Baltimore, however, is an awful place, with high prices and nothing much for your money.

Speaking of other cities, I received today a letter from the actor-author-farmer, JACK ARNOLD, of Washington, who writes from Charlotte, N. C., in deep disgust as follows:

"You have to get a search warrant to get a regular steak down here, and it takes a king's ransom to pry it loose from them."

"All these Southerners are going to retire next year, because they will have all the money in the world by that time. When you pay your hotel bill you imagine you are paying off the old homestead mortgage. I think they should change the title of that old song to 'Carry Me Back FROM Old Virginia,' because after you have been there for a while you will HAVE to be carried back. You will either be broke or have ptomaine poisoning."

IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION. Prominent Citizen at Last Discloses Mystery Concerning That Original Movie Show.

By LEWIS MILLER THAYER. Modesty and an ingrown distile to reveal my true age has prevented

me from getting into the "first morning-picture show" controversy; but the time has come to speak right out in meeting and here goes:

In the fall of 1895 Thomas Armat borrowed one-half of my printing office, then located at 1313 P street northwest (in the basement), to give a private exhibition to the members of the press and a few invited friends, of the first moving pictures shown in this city. A partition was knocked down, chairs borrowed from neighboring houses and stores and the show was on. ROE FULKERSON was there, but my recollection of the film show was that of a fire alarm, with big white horses and a steaming fire engine. If a ballet girl picture was exhibited it made no impression upon my young mind, or else it was reserved as an "after show" for those of more matured age.

"He is always 'there,'" Ed. note. "Mails up to the minute," says Al Burleson. Only takes forty-eight hours for a letter to go from the Munsey Building to the 300 block on East Capitol street.

Twenty-five years ago my mother went to Woodward & Lothrop's store and bought some wondrous polka-dotted material with which to bedeck me in the form of a shirt waist. She bought it from a clerk whom many Washington shoppers know well, MR. JAMES DEARING.

Only a few days ago MR. DEARING hailed my mother as she walked through that same department of the store and said to her: "You this morning. We have just received some of that same polka-dotted material you bought for your little boy twenty-five years ago. Would you like to see it?"

If that isn't using salesmanship and memory mixed, I'll miss my guess.

Did you ever see BILL COCHRAN turn a corner in that new automobile of his?

CHARLIE DARR's son, CHARLIE W. Jr., is looking forward to an active season selling Fords.

WHO REMEMBERS Those human Victrolas we had in ye good old days on the good ships W. W. CORCORAN, the MARY WASHINGTON, the T. V. ARROW-SMITH and the ARDENIA, who always played the same grand old tune, "Heads de waitah for cole drinks."

BILL SMOOT, of Maddox Crick.

Wanted: A Food Price Conference (Continued From First Column.)

other mechanic has bought an automobile. Refer to that, said anarchistic fact in prosperous circles and heads will wag and mouths will ask, "What is the world coming to?"

Civilization and labor have traveled some distance from the days in England when the lord enclosed the deer parks, turned out the farmers and laborers, and then when they became vagabonds, burned a big "V" on their chests with a red hot iron, to teach them not to be vagabonds, but useful producers.

The problem of real distribution, giving to each as much as he needs, and not letting anybody rob the country as a whole is far from being solved in spite of high wages here and there, and mechanics owning motors.

It doesn't make much difference whether you enclose a million acres of land for a deer park, or whether you enclose all the oil wealth of a country with a thousand million dollar corporation.

There will be plenty left for Woodrow Wilson to do after he returns from making all the rest of the world happy and perfect.

What's Doing; Where; When

TODAY.

Dance—Minnesota war workers and men in uniform, Masonic Temple, 112 Eighth street northeast, 8 p. m.

Dance—Fort Meyer, enlisted men of the Eleventh Cavalry, 8 p. m.

Party—Opening—New Y. M. C. A. building at Walter Reed Hospital, 8 p. m.

Services—Midnight mass at the Franciscan Monastery, 11 p. m.

Party—Christmas eve party and dance, Central High School, 9 p. m. Public invited.

Dance—Wallace Piquette Club at East-

ern High School, 8 p. m. Men in uniform invited.

Dance—Thompson Community Center, 8:30 p. m. Men in uniform invited.

Meeting—Jewish Relief Committee, Eighth Street Temple, between H and I streets northwest, 8 p. m.

Open house—Y. W. C. A., 2 p. m. to 10 p. m.

Open house—Calvert Club for girls at 11 Dupont Circle, services at 8 p. m. and 9 p. m.

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